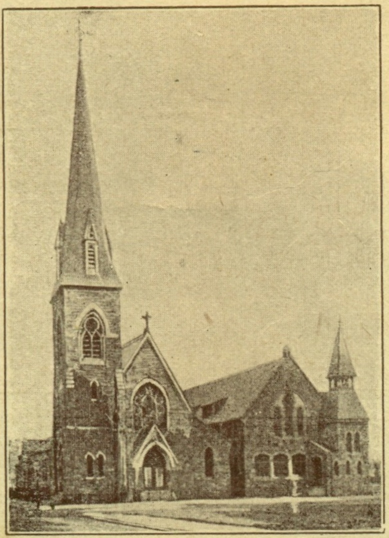
THE MEMORIAL CHURCH
of
THE HOLY COMFORTER

Nineteenth and Wharton Streets
Philadelphia

CORNER STONE, JUNE 15, 1874
CONSECRATED, JUNE 15, 1875

Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Psalms XCVI :8-9.



The Church from Nineteenth and Titan Streets

REV. EDWARD M. JEFFERYS, S. T. D.
Rector

REV. JOSEPH WESTRA B. STEWART, M. A.
Vicar

The Golden Jubilee — *Whitsuntide* 1925

There is no record of the publication of any Year Book, or even booklet, of the history and work of the Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter. It seems fitting, therefore, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the consecration of this beautiful gothic church, that a booklet giving a brief history of its work and containing a few illustrations be published.

The Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter is the embodiment of the filial love and missionary zeal of a loyal member of St. Peter's Church, Third and Pine Streets, Miss Margaretta Stocker Lewis. At the Vestry meeting of that Church on November 16, 1868, the Rector, Reverend Thomas F. Davies, read a letter from Miss Lewis stating that she desired to establish and maintain, at first experimentally and always without expense to that Corporation, a Mission in memory of her mother, Mrs. Martha R. Lewis. The only condition stipulated was that St. Peter's should have early Communion Services for the confirmed people of the neighborhood and that the church seatings be free at the Evening Services for, at least, the winter months. The Vestry heartily endorsed the plan. The mission work was inaugurated by a service held in St. Peter's Church the first Sunday in Advent, 1868. Under the supervision of Doctor Davies and in direct charge of assistant clergymen of St. Peter's, Services, Bible Classes, Mothers' Meetings and Sewing Schools were held until April, 1871 in the Mission Hall over the Fire Department House, Second and Pine Streets. Up to 1871, there had been ninety-seven baptisms, thirty-eight confirmations, six marriages and twenty-two burials. All these records are entered in St. Peter's Church registers.

Interior from Nineteenth Street Entrance

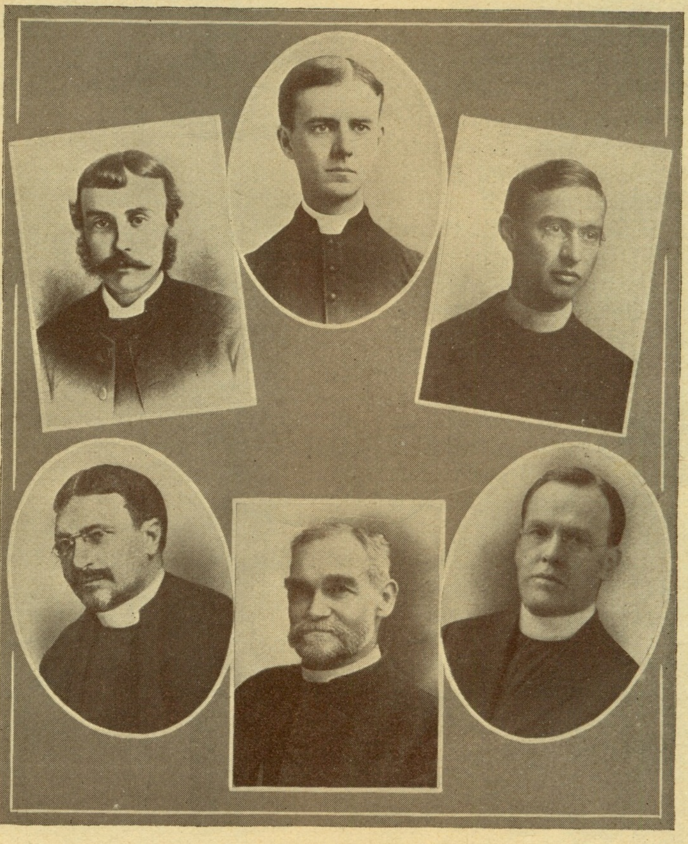
Since the work of St. Peter's House, begun by Mrs. Ann Wharton Lewis Glenn in 1869 near St. Peter's Church, seemed adequate for that neighborhood and since Philadelphia was fast developing westward, it was decided to transfer the proved experimental work to the southwestern part of the city and there give it a more permanent and independent character. The Mission was accordingly removed to a large room over Phillips' grocery store at the northwest corner of Eighteenth and Latona Streets. The Reverend Robert F. Chase, an assistant clergyman at St. Peter's Church, was placed in charge. The children of the neighborhood were invited to the sessions of the Sunday School by the personal, house-to-house, solicitation of Misses Armstrong, Morris, and Giller. It is noteworthy of the faithfulness of these early Sunday School members and of the soundness of the teaching received, that at present two of our most active and loyal communicants, Mrs. Elizabeth Patterson and Mr. Alexander McCausland, attended the first session of this upper room Sunday School. In May, 1871, the building of a temporary chapel at the southeast corner of Nineteenth and Federal Streets was begun. This building known as "The Memorial Chapel of St. Peter's Church" was opened for Divine Service on the First Sunday after the Epiphany, January 7, 1872. The Reverend Dr. Davies, as the celebrant and the preacher, was assisted by the Reverend Robert F. Chase. On this formal occasion, fifty-two communicated. Soon afterwards, on August 3, 1872, the Reverend Robert F. Chase died at Cambridge, Massachusetts. The Reverend Joseph A. Nock having been appointed successor, carried on his work until he resigned in November, 1873. He was succeeded by the Reverend Thomas Poole Hutchinson who was temporary minister-in-charge until June 22, 1874. While he was serving, the corner-stone of "The Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter" was solemnly laid on Tuesday, the fifteenth of June, 1874, by the Rt. Rev. William Bacon Stevens, D. D. The gothic church of Nova Scotian serpentine stone having been completed with its Parish House and henceforth to be known as "The Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter" was opened for service Whitsunday, 1875 and was formally consecrated Monday, June fifteenth of that year by the Bishop of Pennsylvania who preached the sermon. The Reverend George M. Christian was celebrant and forty-two clergy were present. Previous to the consecration—for no debt may be upon a consecrated church—Miss Margaretta Lewis, having paid seventy thousand dollars for the buildings and having set apart eighty thousand dollars for an endowment, by her letter of May 24, 1875, conveyed to the Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of St. Peter's Church in an unencumbered Instrument of Donation the Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter and at the same time appointed as her Trustees, Robert M. Lewis and Francis A. Lewis. The Instrument of Donation was formally accepted and signed on June eighth before the consecration, Whitsun-

tide, 1875. At the Vestry meeting of St. Peter's Church on December 12, 1912, a letter of December 9, from Mr. Francis A. Lewis was read. In that letter, Mr. Lewis stated that the executors of the Miss Margaretta Lewis estate desired to be relieved of the trusteeship and management of the Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter which had been formally conveyed on May 28, 1875. Deed Book F. T. W. No. 217, page 72. The letter further stated that Robert M. Lewis, a trustee, having died on December 30, 1899 and Mr. Lawrence Lewis having reached a very advanced age, the heirs wished to transfer directly over to St. Peter's Corporation, for the express work of the Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter, both the annual income from endowments which would be paid by the Pennsylvania Company for the Insurances of Lives and Granting Annuities and also the balance of $2,005 in cash Mr. Lawrence had on hand. The Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of St. Peter's accepted this trusteeship and appointed Mr. A. J. Dallas Dixon, Treasurer of the annual income. This income now pays for the salaries of the Vicar and of the Visitor together with the bills for fuel, light, sundries, and general repairs to the buildings. From December, 1912, the appointment of the Vicar became the privilege and responsibility of the Rector of St. Peter's Church.

The Reverend George M. Christian who was appointed minister-in-charge, June 29, 1874, resigned October 15, 1875. He was succeeded on the nomination by Miss Margaretta Lewis—the Rector and Vestry of St. Peter's concurring—by the first regular Vicar of the Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter, the Reverend Algernon Morton, who began his faithful and successful work All Saints Day, 1875. But soon sickness forced his resignation on December 27, 1877 and he entered into the rest that remaineth for the people of God on the Feast of the Annunciation 1878 at the age of promise, thirty-three. A marble tablet on the south side of the Chancel commemorates his faithful service. During the illness of the Reverend Algernon Morton and until the appointment of the next Vicar, the Reverend Alexander H. Vinton, on January 5, 1879, this Church was successively in charge of the Reverend William P. Lewis and the Reverend Thomas Pool Hutchinson. Despite the many changes of ministers during this period of four years since its consecration, the work of this Church prospered and was blessed of God.

The Reverend Alexander H. Vinton, having accepted the Rectorship of All Saints Church, Worcester, Massachusetts, and who on April 22, 1902 was consecrated Bishop of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, closed his capable and faithful Vicarship on Whitsunday, 1884. Then the Reverend Ashton Henry took charge until the appointment of the Reverend Stewart Stone who was Vicar from September 7, 1884 until his death on December 12, 1895.

After a most self-denying and devoted ministry of eleven years, which marked the most active and prosperous period in the history



REV. ALGERNON MORTON
1875-1878

REV. ALEXANDER H. VINTON
1879-1884

REV. STEWART STONE
1884-1895

REV. WILLIAM H. GRAFF
1896-1914

REV. JOHN W. WALKER
1914-1919

REV. JOSEPH W. B. STEWART
1919-

of this Memorial Church that has always earnestly contended fot Church Doctrine, Bible Truth and the Faith once delivered unto the Saints, the Rev. Stewart Stone was gathered to his fathers; in the communion of the Holy Catholic Church; in the confidence of a certain Faith; in favour with God and beloved of his flock. During his Vicarship the loving loyalty of many of the older communicants to the Episcopal Church was developed. It was during his administration, that on the first Sunday in Advent, 1886, vested boys under the leadership of Mr. Theodore Knauff were introduced into the choir and were used until about 1905; Further that in 1889 the manuel of the organ was moved to its present position in the Chancel; Finally that the Parish School in which many of our people received their education, was given up. This was done regretfully but at that time the Public Schools had attained a high state of proficiency and it was considered that the expense of the Parish School could be used to better advantage in part payment of the salary of a necessary assistant clergyman for the arduous and increasing parochial duties. The Rev. Harry Baumann was the first regular assistant to any Vicar. He was followed as assistants under the Rev. Stewart Stone. by the Rev. Edward Ritchie, afterward Rector of St. James the Less, Philadelphia, the Rev. Leighton Hoskins, and the Rev. H. Page Dyer. A brass memorial tablet to this well beloved pastor and priest, Stewart Stone, was soon placed by the congregation on the north wall of the Chancel.

On the death of Mr. Stone many of the parishioners earnestly petitioned the trustees for the appointment of his assistant, the Rev. H. Page Dyer, "a Catholic Churchman" as Vicar. But on the motion of a trustee, Mr. Robert M. Lewis, at a meeting of St. Peter's Vestry, on March 25th, the Rev. William H. Graff was unanimously appointed Vicar with the concurrence of the Rector, Rev. J. L. Parks. Due to the strong feeling on the part of many of the more ritualistic communicants, the incoming Vicar at his first service, April 13, 1896 found on his desk requests for two hundred and fifty letters of transfer. I have this information on the authority of a present communicant who was so informed by the Rev. W. H. Graff himself. A clergyman with less faith and courage would have been appalled. but the Vicar met the dire and unexpected situation with tact and forebearance. He soon removed partisan bitterness and misunderstandings by not making drastic changes in the external form of the services so that even some of the former communicants returned. Nevertheless, some two hundred were transferred to St. Elisabeth's, to St. Clement's, to St. Mark's and to West Philadelphia churches. It was not long before he had won the confidence and cooperation of his diminished but loving and loyal flock. For eighteen years Mr. Graff devoted his abundant sympathy, crisp humor, and spiritual power to this Church. Then being worn out by faithful service and being offered a life pension by the trustees, he resigned on Palm

Sunday, 1914. During the longest Vicarship in its history, Mr. Graff had as clerical assistants: Rev. W. Wharton McMullin (twice), Rev. Alfred E. Bentley, Rev. G. A. M. Dyess, Rev. L. P. Wolfe, who was found dead in the Parish House study, November 7, 1905, Rev. W. H. Gibbons, Rev. W. P. Bowie, Rev. R. F. Moody and Rev. H. Q. Miller. The latter ever held in affectionate regard by the parishioners for his faithful ministrations has taken the services during the summer vacation periods of 1920, 1923 and 1924. Because of his advanced age and precarious health, much to our regret his physician will not permit him to serve this summer.

On Monday of Holy Week, April 6, 1914, the Rev. John W. Walker having been appointed Vicar assumed charge of this Church. During his administration, electric lighting for the church and parish house was installed. A marble Altar in memory of the Rev. William H. Graff was built and some other changes were made in the Chancel. Moreover, the sessions of the Church School were changed from the afternoon to the morning and the Sunday Evening Services, due to diminished attendance, were discontinued. His Vicarship embraced the period of the World War. Due to the enlistment of the Rev. Edward M. Jefferys as Chaplain of the Pennsylvania Hospital Unit, Mr. Walker was called upon in May, 1917 to do administrative duties at St. Peter's. Later he did some Church Welfare Work at Camp Meade. Under the patriotic leadership of the Rector and the Vicar, forty-two from this Church enlisted for War Service and four: Harold Knorr, Isaac Murphy, Herbert Warriner and James Woodruff paid the Supreme Sacrifice. During his Vicarship, Mr. Walker was assisted by the Rev. H. Q. Miller, Rev. Granville Taylor, now Vicar of the Chapel of the Mediator, Philadelphia, and the Rev. Charles K. Penney; while Deaconess Walker and later Miss Ethel Hoskins, who is still affectionately remembered in the parish, assisted in office, in visitation, and in girls' work. On October 1, 1919 the Rev. John W. Walker resigned to become headmaster of the Meadowbrook School for Boys and Priest-in-Charge of the Episcopal Chapel at Meadowbrook. By his sound Churchmanship and energetic administration, he has left his imprint upon the parish.

On the first day of October, 1919, the present Vicar, the Rev. Joseph W. B. Stewart assumed charge. For the past twenty-five years and especially during the last ten years, the change of population in the neighborhood of the church has been very marked. The crowding in of the colored people and recently the filtering in of the Italians have driven out our parishioners and thus has made progressive Church Work very difficult. More and more of our faithful Church people with children and also young married couples, are leaving South Philadelphia for New Jersey, West Philadelphia and the Suburbs. During the past five years forty families of the parish have moved to distant points. But the present Vicar, by systematic

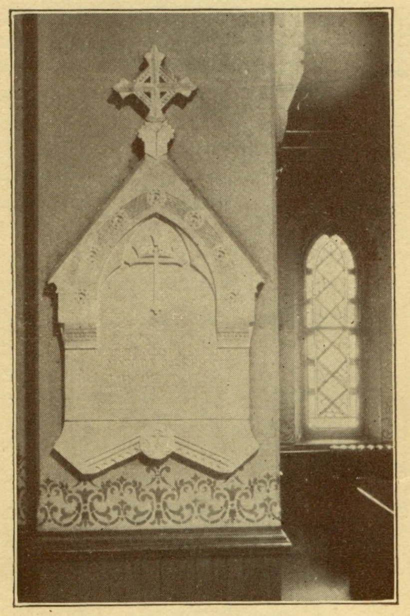
visitation and personal solicitation has brought to the Church from the highways and byways of South Philadelphia twenty-two unchurched families. There are plenty of opportunities for missionary work in our great American cities. The Vicar has baptized and had confirmed two Italian families and he is now working on the boys of the neighborhood. Despite the many removals, in comparison with the previous five years the records show the Baptisms have increase 2% and the Confirmations 55%; while the offerings for the Episcopal Hospital have enhanced 300% and those for all missionary work have enlarged 25%. In 1923 for the first time in our history, the Church School with a Lenten-Easter offering of $615.20 led in the per capita offering all the Schools of the Diocese. During the past five years much of the interior of the parish house and the exterior of the church have been painted; while a new supplementary steam furnace installed in January, 1924 now makes the church and sacristry comfortable at all times. Further, one of the upper rooms in the parish house has been fitted up as a well-equipped warm chapel, seating thirty persons, for the week-day services and saving the heating of the church during the week. Although the attendance at the eight o'clock Communion Service has increased 50%, the attendance at the eleven o'clock service fluctuates much according to the weather and the season. This year there were 175 Easter Communions and the Easter offering for Missions amounted to $550.50. During the history of this Church, the Baptisms have numbered 3,410; the Confirmations 1,328; the Marriages 405; the Burials 1678.

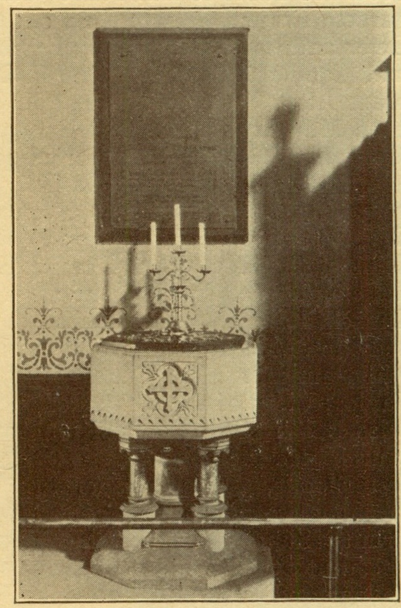
During the incumbency of the present Vicar, for the past five years and a half, since October 1, 1919, there have been no clerical assistants except at summer vacation periods, but he has had successively for visitations and especially for Girls' and Church School work, Miss Ethel Hoskins, Mrs. Emma Lindsay, Miss Selena Campbell, Miss Mary Kevin, Miss Marjorie Lawson and Miss Vesta Markley, some of whom have given only part time service. This Memorial Church is governed by a representative Parish Council of which Mr. Alexander McCausland is Treasurer and Mr. Andrew T. Patterson is Secretary.

We cannot accurately forecast the future, but because of the loving loyalty of many of the communicants for their "Home Church" of the Holy Comforter Memorial, any marked change of policy that might debar them of its ministrations, would not be faithful to the deed of trust nor would it be wise for the welfare of the Church. There is a missionary field about us. Moreover we should consider carefully how we might establish some new work for the rapidly developing far southwestern section of our city. Our church ought to serve as the central home and inspiration for this new work.

The well-proportioned gothic church and parish house which were designed by that talented church architect, George Hewitt are

not the only visible memorials. There are many lesser ones within the buildings. On the interior walls near the main entrance of the church are two memorial tablets. One is of stone and placed there by a loving daughter before the completion of the edifice; the other is of brass and was given by a grateful congregation soon after the death of their benefactor. They read as follows:





This Church is erected to the
Glory of God
And in memory of a loving Mother
Martha R. Lewis,
Born March 11, 1789
Died January 26, 1868
She being dead yet speaketh.

In grateful memory of
Margaretta Stocker Lewis
Who departed this life
Nov. XIX, MDCCCLXXXVI
"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours and their works do follow them."

Apart from the memorial tablets that have been mentioned previously, there are some others. In the Chancel there is a stone tablet to the memory of Rev. Robert F. Chase who from 1871 to 1873 was the first Minster-in-Charge. On the side of the organ, facing the Nave, where the manuel used to be, until 1889, there is a brass tablet in memory of our former organist, Miss Katherine King. The fabric of this church contains many memorials of which some are

the reconstructed Altar and Chancel, to the Rev. and Mrs. W. H. Graff, the Rev. Lauren P. Wolf, Marie Lee, Ellen S. Happich and Mary Major; the brass Altar Cross, to Rebecca and Elizabeth Phillips; the Encharistic Candlesticks, one pair to John W. Wright, another to Margaret Orrell and Amy Bryan; the Altar-Book Rest, to John Lindsay; the Altar Book, and Rug to Ellen S. Happich; the Credence Table to Lawrence James Cuthbertson; the Pulpit to Margaretta Frances Mort; the Font to Martha R. Lewis; the Baptismal Ewer and its Rest to Emily Lewis Giller; the three branched Baptismal Candlestck to William P. McMahon. While there are many brass Altar Vases only one pair is designated as a memorial, which is to Margaret Hicks and George Miller. This church is thus redolent with the sacred memories of saintly characters.

During its history, the Holy Comforter Memorial has not only helped missionaries, it has given missionaries. It has given for Holy Orders the Rev. John Wilson Cook. Assistant at St. Elizabeth's Philadelphia, the Rev. George Irvine Hiller, Rector of All Saints Church, Lakeland, Florida, and the Rev. John Gillespie, Rector of Trinity Church, Falls City, Nebraska. Two of "our girls," Miss Edna Kennedy and Miss Imogen Robinson are wives of the latter missionaries; while another Miss Edna Hiller, is the wife of the Rev. Granville Taylor, Vicar of the Chapel of the Mediator, Philadelphia. Moveover, Miss Bertha Stietz and Miss Jennie Taylor, both confirmed in this church, are members respectively of St. Margaret's and All Saints' Sisterhoods. This consecration of lives for the ministry and in sacrificial service is not confined alone to the prosperous past. On Trinity Sunday in the Church of The Saviour, Thirty-eighth and Chestnut Streets, Mr. Robert Oliver Kevin, after a brilliant career in College and in the Philadelphia Divinity School, expects to be made a Deacon by Bishop Garland. Further, his sister, Miss Mary Kevin, after graduation in 1924 from the University of Pennsylvania has been doing missionary work with the Church Mission for Help and is also assisting certain evenings at the University Settlement, Twenty-sixth and Lombard Streets, Philadelphia. We feel that few of our larger city parishes can show a better record of sacrifice and service for God and His Church.

Today there are here most of the regular parochial organizations of a city parish; as Church School, Choir, senior and junior, Woman's Auxiliary, Girls' Friendly, Young People's Fellowship of Confirmation Alumni, Altar, Crucifiers and Servers Guilds, Boy's Club and Girl's Club and the Beneficial Assurance Society. Each of these organizations is doing its quiet work in its own way.

However brief may be any history of this Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter, the faithfulness and loyalty of a few outstanding families ought not to be omitted. First, I must mention Mr. Alexander McCausland, our capable Treasurer and loyal Churchman who permits only a rare sickness to keep him from every ser-

vice. Mr. McCausland is always ready to serve in any emergency from Organist to Sexton. Next, let me mention our senior living confirmed member, active and willing still, Mrs. Elizabeth Patterson, who has radiated her Church loyalty to her capable family. Then there are the Misses King who (Katherine, now deceased, who for ten years and then Anna, for twenty-seven years) have played our church organ most willingly and well for the long period of thirty-seven years. The children and grandchildren of that staunch Churchwoman, lately deceased, Mrs. Margaret Blundin, have inherited her faithfulness to the Episcopal Church. Many loyal and true as the Bailey, the Bell, the Bruce, the Buck, the DeGorgue, the Gibson, the Jaunich, the Johnson, the Kennard, the Kennedy, the Kronzer, the Lee, the Lindsay, the Marsh, the Miller, the Morrison, the Muller, the Murphy, the McAllister, the Prophet, the Robinson, the Scott, the Simon, the Stewart, the Wille families with others too numerous to mention are, here or in other spheres, serving God and keeping the Faith. On these, the living here and the living there, who love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, may God's blessings rest and light perpetual shine. May we all, by our faith and service, win our Master's parabolic commendation and award "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

O GOD, Holy Ghost, Sanctifier of the faithful, visit, we pray thee, this Congregation with thy love and favour; enlighten their minds more with the light of the everlasting Gospel; graft in their hearts a love of the truth; increase in them true religion; nourish them with all goodness; and of thy great mercy keep them in the same, O blessed Spirit, whom, with the Father and the Son together, we worship and glorify as one God, world without end. Amen.